

and with six troopers had ridden boldly down the Champs Elysées. He was the first Prussian who entered Paris—to be followed during the morning by an apparently interminable host of infantry and cavalry, bronzed and weather-stained men, bearded, brusk, but silent in this hour of triumph. The people of Paris, gathered in surly groups upon every vantage ground, received them with a silence that almost could be felt. Gamins here and there hissed and uttered catcalls, or threw their caps in the air; but these were scarcely interludes; and nothing so strange in history has been seen or known as this mute occupation of a conquered city by a great voiceless host moving like a machine through its heart.

Rohan heard the tramp of squadrons marching; he heard the clang of arms and the quick deep word of command—and he knew that he stood amid Prussians come to the possession of his beloved Paris. And yet in spite of all, the folly of his own mad desires now presented itself to him and left him dumb and ashamed. A true soldier, he asked what right had he to strike at these men in cold blood. Had the French been victorious, would not he have entered Berlin with his regiment as these men were now entering Paris? And could his country be avenged by that which all law must still call "murder"? He began to see that this tragedy must continue to recoil not upon the enemies but upon the people of France. Every German word he heard in the Champs Elysées seemed to say: "Death, death to the vanquished!" His oath in the Café Richelieu rang in his ears as a clarion call to action.

"Take me away, child," he said to the girl anon. "Let us go where there are no Prussians—let us go away from Paris." "Monsieur," she said quietly, "do not talk like that. You will not always be blind, monsieur. France has need of all her soldiers. Monsieur, be brave because you are a Frenchman."

He did not answer her; but permitted himself to be led away, he knew not whither. The houses of the streets through which they now passed were shuttered and deserted. Some of them showed gaping walls and sagging beams. All the cafés were closed; the women abroad, and they were few, wore black dresses; the men went with downcast eyes and weary steps.

"Where are you taking me, child—what street is this?" he asked the young girl presently.

"Monsieur," she said, "it is the Rue de Guichy. One who loves you lives here."

"I do not understand you. Is my name known to you, then?"

"You are the Vicomte de Rohan," she rejoined, "and you swore to take your life the day the Prussians entered Paris. Monsieur, that life is not yours to take. It is another's."

He stood still upon the pavement and drew her closer to him. With the instinctive liberty permitted to the blind, he passed his hands over her face, touching her hair, her eyes, her soft childish cheeks.

"I do not know you," he said at last; and turning from her he asked as one who would answer his own question: "Who shall learn to love the blind? Who shall live when life is not light?"

The girl caught his hand again, and entering one of the houses in a little street near the Madeleine, she led him up to an apartment on the second floor, and turning a key in the outer door entered a spacious room, through whose wide windows the light came uncurtained to the soldier's white bed below.

"Monsieur," she cried in triumph, "here is some one who loves you—here is my father!"

A soldier lay on the camp-bed, a veteran of many battles, but now a wan shrunken figure of a man whose face the finger of wounds and privation had touched, but in whose eyes the fires of youth still burned.

"Pierre," the soldier exclaimed—"it is



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I, Maurice! Have you forgotten Worth already?"

He raised himself up in his bed and stretched out both hands. These two had ridden side by side in the great cavalry charge at Worth, and Maurice St. Just had carried the Vicomte de Rohan across his saddle while the Prussian sabers were already busy among their comrades. Invalided home, nursed devotedly by his daughter, Maurice had known nothing of his old comrade's condition until yesterday—and then he had doubted if the tidings were not too late.

"It is I, Maurice, old comrade! Why have you deserted me?" he exclaimed as the Vicomte stood voiceless by his bedside. "Nay, come nearer! Let me touch your hands; let me hear your voice! Speak not of misfortune. There is no misfortune while we love, no night while the sun shines in our hearts. Look at me, Pierre—I have sent for you to redeem the oath, sworn to me at Worth, that you would give me life for life. I will have it to-day—your life, old comrade, that hand in hand with me we shall live the years together. Nay, are you silent? Look at me! I say! Has God no sight to give you that you may look into the heart of a man who loves you. Is it all darkness, that you see no new France rising on the ashes of the old, no flowers of victory growing upon the graves of the dead? Are you the only one to say 'Woe' to us, when every true French voice cries 'Revenge'? Look up and see, comrade! The God of France will guide your eyes aright."

He drew the trembling man to the window and clasped his hand in an iron grip. The sun shone upon them both as from a riven cloud anchored above the house.

There were tears in the Vicomte's eyes when, kneeling suddenly by the bedside, he cried: "My God, I hear Thy message! The veil is lifted from my eyes—let me live that I may see the sun shining again upon the face of my country!"

Edmund Orlopp told Dolores the story that night when the lightning fire of the Germans lighted the sky above Western Paris and the whole army echoed the heavy tread of armed men from across the Rhine.

"It was lucky I thought of Maurice St. Just," said he; "two old soldiers together are very much like two school-boys. The man who saved your cousin's life at Worth was the right man to save it here in Paris. It was just a happy accident, that was all, Dolores."

"All your accidents are happy, Edmund," she said; and then asked him: "Do you believe that he will ever recover his sight? The child tells me that he knew the sun shone this morning when he stood by Maurice's bedside."

"Imagination possibly. Let us hope for the best. At least he has been spared much, and yonder is a light we shall never see in Paris again, Dolores."

He indicated the Prussian watch-fires, and standing with her close to him at an open window heard her earnest prayer that it might be so.

Neither foresaw the cataclysm about to burst upon the city, nor dreamed of those terrible days of blood and fire which vanquished Paris must live through.

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MUNICIPAL STARS

SIR HENRY IRVING has caused some merriment in old England by prophesying that Manchester will yet have a municipal theater with a lord mayor for star actor.

They feel differently about it in Australia, where the Hon. George Coppin sat for twenty years in the Victoria Parliament, though he was Australia's most popular comedian and acknowledged "Father of the Australian Stage."

His parliamentary colleague, Morton King, the Colony's great tragedian, once was sent for in a crisis to form a new government. King once took the part of Hamlet in a benefit performance for the Melbourne Hospital, in which every male character was acted by a Member of Parliament.

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